



August 1, 2003

**The Honorable Michael Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554**

Dear Chairman Powell:

I had the opportunity to attend a forum that focused on the findings of a study conducted by the Case Western Reserve University's Center for Regional Economic Issues. The study outlined the tremendous potential economic benefits to Ohio and the Greater Akron region if SBC is given long distance approval for the state.

The Greater Akron Region enjoys a diverse and robust economy. Our businesses in the tri-county region of Medina, Portage and Summit Counties are positioned to take advantage of the competitive services that SBC and other telecommunication companies offer to help them continue to grow. The level of competition has intensified with the entry of residential providers MCI and AT&T, bringing even more choices for consumers and businesses in Ohio.

The potential decrease in long distance rates, coupled with the generation of additional jobs and taxable income that are outlined in the study offer compelling argument in support of SBC's long distance entry.

The Greater Akron Chamber competes daily with other states in the attraction and retention of jobs in our region. The fact that incumbent carriers in 43 states have either been given approval by their state regulatory commission or the Federal Communications Commission is a cause for concern. As the nation's seventh largest state, Ohio cannot afford to be perceived as a laggard in any area that would bring a positive economic climate to the state. A competitive long distance landscape is another key element that will make our economic development efforts successful.

I respectfully urge the FCC approve Proceeding 03-167, SBC's long distance entry, at the earliest juncture possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel C. Colantone".

**Daniel C. Colantone
President & CEO**